

Membership

How to Obtain,
Maintain and
Involve People
in Your
Organization



Neighborhood Learning Fund—May 2002

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- Youth Involvement in Your Organization
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- Membership Involvement
by Margaret Oser, United Way
- Austin Neighborhoods, Profile

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- Membership Recruitment and Retention
By Esther Cantu, United Way
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Neighborhood Learning Fund—May 2002

Membership recruitment

Neighborhood organizations initially can attract members through well-publicized meetings and by directly involving people in group projects. However, many organizations inadvertently restrict their numbers by making membership forms and sign-up sheets available only at meetings.

To maximize membership potential, your neighborhood organization should undertake a membership drive that directly reaches every household, business, church, and school. If your neighborhood organization is relatively young, wait until a few projects have been completed before launching the drive. A drive sponsored by an organization that is unknown will be hampered by skepticism and doubts of legitimacy.

The best approach for a membership campaign is to have volunteers go **door-to-door**, calling on neighbors in person. Consider a one-day or weeklong blitz to help volunteers maintain enthusiasm and then sponsor a fun party for volunteers where experiences are shared.

The many reasons for and appeals about why people should join and the benefits they and the neighborhood will gain from membership should be fully reviewed before you begin any campaign.



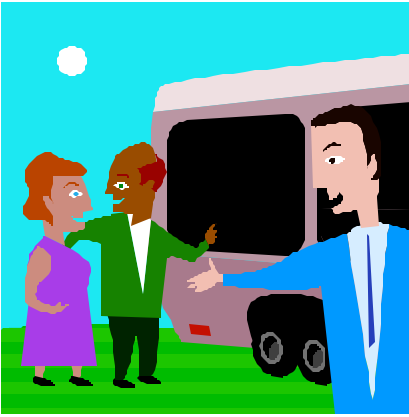
Volunteers should be armed with printed matter to encourage residents to join. This can be a **brochure** or a simple letter from your chairperson that explains the organization, stresses why neighborhood support is needed, includes details of upcoming activities and

meeting dates, and urges each contact to attend. A newsletter or brochure also can be given to each resident. Volunteers should carry **membership forms** with them and offer both immediate and mail-in membership opportunities.

Your organization can develop a **block leader network** as the foundation of its membership campaign

Ideas for Obtaining New Members

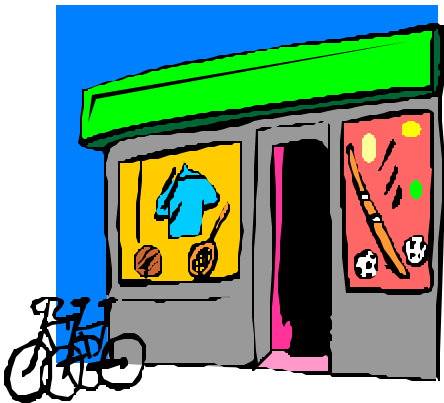
- *Door-to-Door visits*
- *Mail-in Registration*
- *Targeted Mailings*
- *Welcome Packet for new residents*
- *Neighborhood Brochure*
- *Information table at local gathering places—local merchants, grocery store, day care center*
- *Posters, signage, A-frame sign board, banners*
- *Block Leaders to provide information to neighbors*
- *Offer a business membership category in your organization*
- *Recruit local businesses to advertise /promote their services in your group's newsletter*
- *Establish a youth committee to advise the board of directors and participate in decision making*
- *Partner with local churches, PTAs and other nonprofit groups on community projects*
- *Hold a community open house to inform and present neighborhood accomplishments*



and other activities. Officers or board members can contact potential block leaders to explain their duties and gain approval for publishing their names and telephone numbers in the newsletter. In addition to building membership, block captains can welcome new residents, pass out flyers and newsletters, serve as a conduit for identifying specific problems on the block, and place volunteers in activities.



Be sure to welcome **new residents** to join your organization. Greet them with a welcome packet of information including neighborhood meeting dates and times, who the current board members are, a copy of your latest newsletter, and other official information (e.g., police and fire phone numbers, garbage pick-up days and regulations, post office locations, etc.). You might include a neighborhood history, a list of local businesses, schools and bus route information. Encourage local businesses to donate coupons, menus or other promotions to include in your welcome packet. Some neighborhoods give new residents a complimentary 6-month membership. Hand deliver the packet and personally welcome each new resident.



It is important to attract many **different types of members** to your organization. Consider implementing several membership categories (business, youth, support organization) in order to gain support in many areas. Business owners might not have time to attend meetings, but can offer support by donating services (e.g., printing your newsletter), door prizes, movie tickets, plants, refreshments, or supplies (e.g., paint for graffiti cover-up). Business owners can benefit from being involved with neighborhood organizations. Residents often will patronize and promote neighborhood businesses that show support for the neighborhood. Businesses may share common concerns with the neighborhood and want to work to find solutions to problems. Neighborhood improvements accomplished by a strong neighborhood organization benefit everyone, including businesses.



Encourage **youth** to participate in your organization by offering them a membership and/or a position on the board of directors. A youth committee can advise the board on activities and local causes that are of interest to them. Inquire about what types of neighbor-

hood activities youth will support; then, give them the responsibility, decision making powers, and assistance to make those activities happen.

Area **schools, churches, and nonprofit organizations** also can be an asset to your organization. They are good resources to provide meeting space and additional volunteers, or offer other means of support. Working cooperatively with support organizations on projects and causes allows the neighborhood organization to undertake larger projects.



How to meet your neighbors

Knowing your neighbors by name and face gives people living on a block a feeling of community and safety. If you know everyone who lives on your block, then you know who belongs and when something may be awry.

Here are some ways to get to know your neighbors:

- Sit on the front porch or lawn to relax after dinner.
- Ask to borrow a cup of milk or something small, even if you don't need it. Borrow an egg to make cookies and then give your neighbor some of the cookies.
- Find out about City grants for neighborhood improvements such as the Neighborhood Tree Fund and the Neighborhood Project Fund. Go door-to-door to get signatures.
- Notice your neighbor's hobbies and ask questions.
- Plan a yard sale and invite people on your block to contribute items or have a coordinated sale involving several homes.
- Wave and say hello when you see your neighbor, ask about their children, and be open to starting a conversation.
- If you have an abundant flower or vegetable garden, offer to share excess vegetables or plants with your neighbors.
- Take frequent walks on your street. Stop to chat with neighbors who are outside.
- Invite people on your block over for lemonade or dessert.
- Offer to baby sit.



Notes



Membership retention

Obtaining new members is only half the battle. Membership retention is the only way to successfully grow your organization. For every member who is active in the organization, there are probably at least two who would have stayed involved if they had been properly motivated. The following tips will help your neighborhood organization retain members after they have joined.

Help members find a place in your organization.

Not everyone is a self-starter. Many will offer to help, but have no idea where to begin. A list of volunteer activities that includes a job description and approximate time commitment for each task should be developed and made available.

New people should always be welcomed. Your officers and steering committee should watch out for new faces and welcome them heartily. Each new



member or guest should be introduced to someone who lives nearby or who shares a similar interest.

The appearance of cliques should be avoided.

New members who see the same people running every project will feel excluded and may not return. People who are not part of the core group or steering committee should be appointed to leadership roles. Moreover, decisions and projects should always be explained to everyone. It should not be assumed that every member has been involved from the beginning.

Meetings should be well organized. Busy people will not stay involved in organizations that they con-

Ideas for Maintaining Interest

- *Print and distribute a regular newsletter*



- *Print and distribute a neighborhood directory*
- *Create a neighborhood calendar*
- *Hold a Neighborhood Garage Sale*
- *Have a pot-luck supper before your neighborhood meeting*
- *Hold a neighborhood event such as a block party, parade, or street festival*
- *Have a community summer picnic or ice cream social*
- *Hold a free concert in the park*
- *Hold a kite flying contest*



Ideas for Maintaining Interest

- *Set up a phone calling tree to remind people about upcoming meetings or events*
- *Post information on your group's Neighborhood Link free web site (see www.neighborhoodlink.com)*
- *Place signs at entrances to the neighborhood announcing meetings*
- *Find a central pedestrian location to place a neighborhood bulletin board or kiosk*



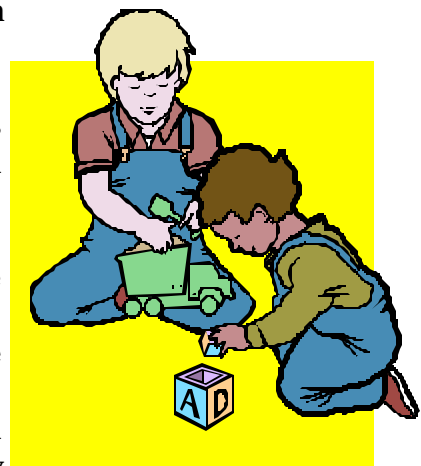
- *Post your newsletter and information about neighborhood events and concerns in a central location*
- *At meetings, give away door prizes or raffle items donated by local businesses*

sider to be a waste of time. A written agenda should be provided and followed. The meetings should have and follow a time limit. The meeting facilitator should be sensitive to new ideas and new people, be resourceful, and attempt to limit talkative speakers without being offensive. Results of previous activities should be announced at meetings.

Activities and meetings should be fun. Making neighborhood activities a constant drudgery will quickly burn out volunteers and organizers. Sponsoring parties and celebrations to enjoy neighboring will allow members to get to know each other. Nonetheless, remember to plan activities that appeal to everyone. If activities are planned that appeal only to the “wine and cheese” crowd, the “beer and pretzel” folks will never be fully involved. Make efforts to involve everyone at your social events, including children and the elderly; the support and talents of all are essential!

Remember that members of the neighborhood organization make the final decisions – not the president or chairperson. The president or chairperson should act in accordance with membership desires. The collective whole of a neighborhood serves as a democracy. Organizations that are run in a dictatorial style will quickly lose active supporters.

Provide free child care. Many parents feel that they can not attend community meetings because they do not have someone to watch their children or can not afford a babysitter. Hire local teens to care for children so their parents can attend neighborhood meetings. Provide snacks and activities to keep the children occupied. If there are only a few children, welcome them into the meeting. They will learn the importance of good citizenship and community values.



Membership involvement

Often times, people are willing to help if they are asked, especially if it involves a talent or something they are good at. It is harder to raise your hand and volunteer than to turn down someone who asks for your help.

To get people involved in their community, they must be asked to work on something that is important to them. First, you need to find out what issues and types of projects people are willing to give their time and effort toward. One way is to conduct a community survey. A survey or questionnaire can be conducted by volunteers who go door-to-door asking the questions or leaving a form to be filled out. The survey can also be mailed or printed in the neighborhood newsletter; although, it is harder to get people to respond unless they have someone personally contact them. Don't forget to ask the youth and business community what issues are of interest to them.

Once you find out the interests and priorities of the neighborhood, you can plan events to address them. If neighborhood appearance is an issue, plan a clean-up day to pickup trash, clean the alleys, paint out graffiti and trim common areas. Have a celebration such as a bar-b-que or pizza party, at lunch time or the end of the day to thank volunteers for their hard work. Kick off the event with coffee, juice, donuts, and breakfast tacos.



Other fun ways to enhance the appearance of the neighborhood are to hold a holiday decoration contest, sell matching bows or decorations to all homes to put on their door or mailbox, sell house numbers or door plaques to unify the area, and have a street tree planting day.

To make people aware of the strengths in your neighborhood you can hold a tour of the best gardens

Ideas for getting members involved

- *Don't wait for people to volunteer—personally invite them to accept a volunteer responsibility*
- *Conduct a survey to determine neighborhood priorities*
- *Have a Neighborhood Clean-up and then celebrate*



- *Hold a holiday decoration contest with prizes*
- *Start a vegetable co-op*
- *Start a child care co-op*
- *Hold a house or garden tour*
- *Write a neighborhood history*
- *Create a directory of neighbors who will baby-sit, dog-walk, house-sit, do lawn care, etc. Include talents they will offer such as calligraphy, bike repair, music lessons, etc.*
- *Have all your neighbors display the same holiday ribbon, yellow porch light, or street*

Ideas for getting members involved

- *Hold a scavenger hunt for the children (and their parents) that includes finding special neighborhood items*
- *Hold a bicycle or skate board clinic for kids to teach them about safety, care and repair issues*



- *Get a group rate and attend a baseball game, museum, or other event as a neighborhood group*
- *Ask everyone on the block to donate to buy a savings bond for each child on the block when they graduate from high school. Have every resident sign a card of congratulations*

(vegetable, flower and landscape gardens) or most unique homes. Have a plant sale in conjunction with the garden tour, or associate a house renovation fair with a tour of restored homes. Interview older residents about what the community was like in years past and write a neighborhood history.



Another way to involve people is to ask them about their talents and skills. Create a neighborhood directory that lists people who offer babysitting, lawn mowing, dog-walking, or house-sitting services. List people who have special talents to offer such as calligraphy, bike repair, or music lessons. Also list people who have special knowledge or training in areas such as plumbing, electrical repairs, house painting, massage therapy, computer repair, etc.

Co-ops are a great way to get people involved in something that benefits them and the community. If your neighborhood has a lot of young families with children, consider starting a babysitting co-op where families swap child care services; it may even lead to a video, toy and clothes exchange. If many neighbors are interested in gardening, start a co-op to trade plants or swap vegetables. Vegetables can also be offered for sale to residents who do not have abundant gardens. A fruit and vegetable co-op can also form around people who are willing to take turns going to the produce or farmer's market early in the morning and bringing home fruits and vegetables for the group. A home repair co-op can form around people who are willing to trade their home repair skills with others.

Involving the youth often gets the parents involved, too. You might hold a neighborhood scavenger hunt for the children. List items to collect such as the signature of a neighbor with the letter Q in their name, the name of a neighbor who is a soccer coach, the name of a neighbor who is a dentist, the name of a person who has lived in the neighborhood over 50 years, etc.

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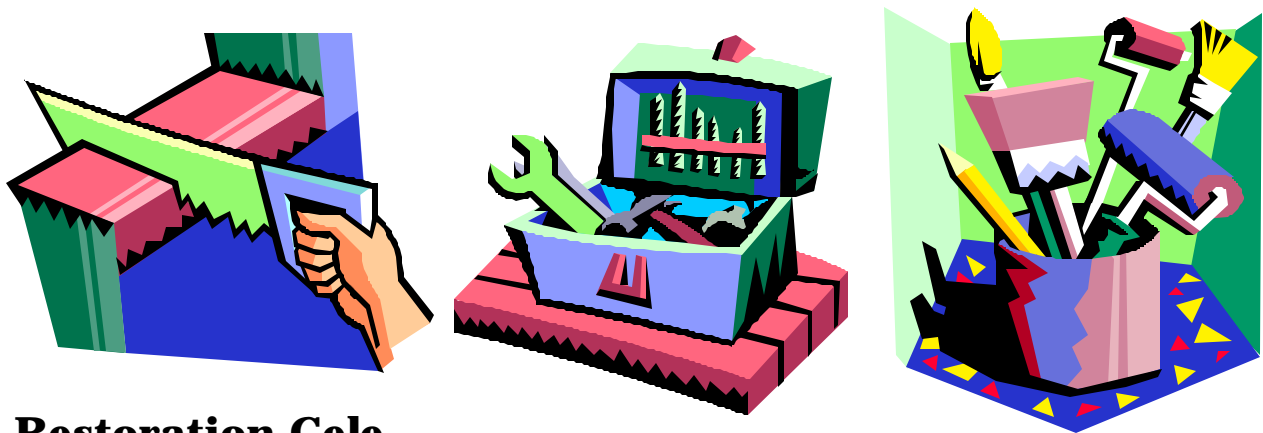
Notes



Project Ideas

Clean-up Days

A cleanup day is an important way to boost community spirit, involve the community-at-large in your organization, and let everyone know that your group works for the betterment of all. To organize a clean-up event, your group can assign block captains to inform residents, post signs at local stores, and handout flyers around the community. Volunteers can be enlisted to help older residents clear their yards, driveways, or curb areas of debris. Your group can even exchange cleanup services with neighbors for attendance at one neighborhood meeting. Once neighbors attend one meeting, they are bound to come back again. Arrangements can also be made through Keep San Antonio Beautiful for a special trash pick-up for the day (dial-a-trailer program).



Restoration Celebration

By bringing do-it-yourselfers together for a social hour, your neighborhood group can promote home improvement while simultaneously recruiting new members. This will provide a forum to discuss mutual home repair problems and exchange ideas and suggestions on how to fix up older houses. These gatherings could be held on a regular basis, perhaps in newly renovated homes so that guests can see the many benefits of home repair.

Potluck Suppers

Potluck suppers are festive neighborhood events and can be modified to suit any occasion. For example, your organization could sponsor a holiday potluck supper preceded by a songfest or caroling in the community. Your group also could ask residents to bring community specialties or dishes that begin with the initials of their last names. In addition to bringing neighbors together, potluck suppers can also be used to attract new members or thank volunteers. If the group is not too large, you may want to plan a progressive dinner, where each course is served at a different house.



Notes



Project Ideas *continued*

Green-Up Days

A green-up day can get residents into the spring spirit by providing them with flowers and plants for yards, curbing strips, and window ledges. Your neighborhood group can organize committees to locate a nursery that will provide plants in quantity at market prices (or below), publicize the project, and obtain prepaid orders from interested residents. Another committee can be responsible for finding a central delivery point where residents can pick up their orders and make home deliveries to senior citizens and the disabled. This activity is sure to create a neighborhood-wide dialogue about your group and the things it does to make the community a better place for all its residents.



Neighborhood Tree Planting

Neighborhood tree plantings are a great way to beautify your neighborhood and interest more people in becoming members of your organization. Arrange with a local nursery or landscaping company to provide your group with trees and delivery at cost. Take orders from neighbors who would like a tree planted in their yard. The cost to them will be the price of the discounted tree plus membership in your organization. Recruit scout troops, the high school environmental club, or make arrangements with SAFFE officers to have probationers help dig the holes for the trees. After the holes are dug, have a neighborhood tree planting day. Each household ordering a tree can be responsible for planting their own tree or you can have youth and volunteers available to do the planting or assist those who need help. The City Planning Department's Neighborhood Tree Fund provides free trees to neighborhoods who apply and qualify. The trees must be planted near the street and more trees are available to neighborhoods who combine the tree planting with a membership drive.





Notes



Project Ideas *continued*



Block Party

A block party is a surefire way to bring people out and get them together for a pancake breakfast, potluck picnic, barbeque, street festival, or similar celebration. The block party encourages residents to get to know each other in an informal environment and to spread the word about current or planned neighborhood activities. It is useful to have neighborhood newsletters, brochures, and membership forms displayed at the party.

Advertise your party early and often.

Send out a flyer a month before to give people the opportunity to save the date. Have a calling committee to personally invite each neighbor a few weeks before the event and send out reminder flyers or postcards a few days before the big day. Be sure to invite your neighborhood SAFFE Officers.

Visit the local businesses and ask for donations for the party. Grocery stores and restaurants often give free food or supplies. Be sure to acknowledge their donations by putting out their cards or listing their contribution in your newsletter. Ask local music stores, restaurants, theaters, flower shops, etc. to donate small but nice gifts to be given away as door prizes.

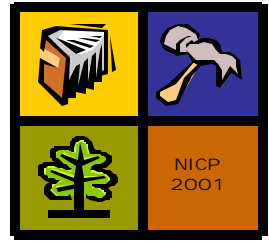
Consult with the neighborhood youth or include them on your planning committee to find out what activities they would like to have at the party. Let them help coordinate and have some responsibility.

Themes help make a block party memorable. Plan your party around local cultural holidays, Halloween, the Fourth of July, or National Night Out. Honor local high school graduates, new residents, or important milestones.

National Night Out is celebrated the first Tuesday every August. It is a great opportunity to get neighbors out to meet each other and have a good time. Ask everyone to keep their porch light lit that night (and every night) to help promote neighborhood security. The National Association of Town Watch, sponsor of the national event, has a web site (www.nno.org) with free information and give-aways you can purchase to distribute.



Notes



Project Ideas *continued*

Neighborhood Fair

Your neighborhood can organize a neighborhood fair featuring food, games, face painting, music, and live entertainment. A park can be reserved or a permit obtained to block-off a residential street. Committees for publicity, decorations, food, games, and entertainment should be organized well in advance. The fair can be held to celebrate a holiday, organized around a theme, or it can be a simple gathering to bring neighbors together and inform them about the organization. Hosting a fair will let your neighbors know that joining the neighborhood organization is not “all work and no play.”

Community Parade

Celebrating a holiday or event with a parade is a good way to involve neighborhood children and their parents. Decorate bicycles, wagons and scooters for the Fourth of July, have children make Easter bonnets and then show them off, end a Halloween costume parade with a party, or dress up your pets and give prizes for the funniest pet in a parade. Be sure to make advance arrangements for a temporary street closure where the parade will take place.

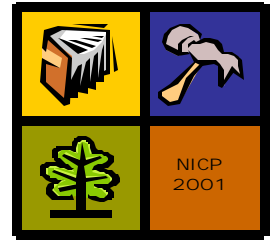


Other Party Ideas

- Picnic in the Park—have an old-fashioned picnic in a local park with potato salad , grilled hamburgers, and watermelon. Have family volleyball or softball games.
- Concert in the Park— On a summer evening hire a local jazz ensemble or arrange for the school band to play. People can bring a picnic dinner or dessert.
- Movies in the Park—Have everyone bring a blanket or lawn chairs and show movies in a local park on summer evenings.
- Celebrate Your Neighborhood's Birthday—Celebrate the date construction began on the first house in your neighborhood or the date your organization was formed.
- Neighborhood Tour—Have people open their houses or gardens to visitors, showing off the assets of your neighborhood.



Notes



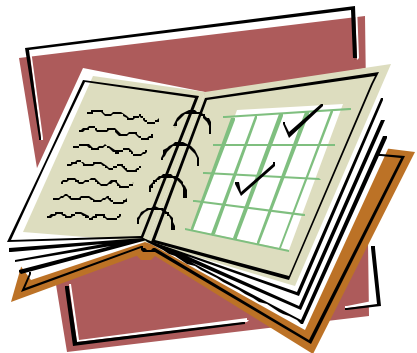
Project Ideas *continued*

Neighborhood Directory and/or Calendar

Improve communication in your neighborhood and get to know your neighbors by creating a neighborhood directory; you can list names alphabetically as well as by street. You might want to include children's names and ages (helps with babysitting lists), pet's names (to be returned home if lost), emergency contacts, etc. You can also include a list of services and expertise provided by neighborhood residents. If a neighbor wants to remain anonymous or keep details private, be neighborly and respect his or her desires.



Include a calendar in your directory, or print a wall calendar with photographs from your neighborhood on each monthly page. Be sure to label neighborhood meeting days, special neighborhood event days, and other community activities. You might contact local schools and include PTA meeting and school festival dates. List election days with voting locations, and other community activities.



Ask neighborhood businesses, organizations and churches if they would like to be included in your directory or calendar. The cost of producing your publication might be covered by selling small business ads or asking for sponsorships.

Neighborhood Newsletter



Newsletters can unite communities. Creating a neighborhood newsletter is a great way to inform neighbors about their organization and the community-at-large. Try to make your newsletter interesting, informative, inclusive, balanced, consistent, timely and on schedule so that people will want to read it. Some neighborhoods include space for local elected officials, recipes, crossword puzzles, or classified ads. The better your newsletter is, the more popular it will become. Distribute your newsletter to all residents, businesses, schools and organizations in the area, informing them about your organization and how to become a member.



Notes



Project Ideas *continued*

Community Questionnaire/Survey

In order to get people interested in joining and participating in your group, the organization must work towards goals that the community thinks are important to them. Conducting a community survey is a good way find out what neighbors think are priority items. Although it is more time intensive, more responses are obtained by going door-to-door and asking the survey questions personally (an interview survey). Questionnaires also may be mailed or distributed by hand, allowing residents to fill them out and return their responses by mail. Forms should be returned or mailed to a single, central location and tabulated by a committee. It is important to poll many people and diverse groups in your neighborhood and not just members of your organization. This effort allows all types of people to become aware of your organization and gives them a chance to voice their opinions, join the group, and work on solutions to problems.

There are many different kinds of surveys. The design of the survey, including the best way to phrase questions, is important. For example, will the questions be open ended (the response is written), closed-ended (a box is checked from several choices), or partially closed-ended (check a box or fill in "other")? How questions are asked will determine how the answers will be compiled. Books on the subject can help you design the survey questions. Questionnaires: Design and Use by Douglas R. Berdil is available in the reference section of the Central Library. Other good books are:

Designing and Conducting Survey Research by Louis M. Rea and Richard A. Parker

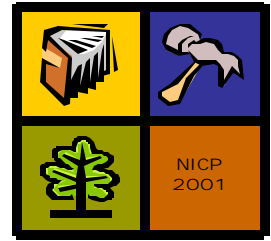
How to Conduct Self Administered and Mail Surveys by Linda B. Bourque & Eve P. Fielder

Improving Survey Questions: Design & Evaluation by Floyd J. Fowler, Jr.

Standardized Survey Interviewing: Minimizing Interviewer Related Error by Floyd J. Fowler, Jr. & Thomas W. Mangione



Notes



Project Ideas *continued*

Logo Contest

Logos are an important part of a group's identity. Sponsoring a create-a-logo contest is a good way to involve residents of all ages and gain publicity for your organization. Contest entries can be displayed at a prominent location, such as a local bank, and judged by a panel (be sure to select as objective a panel as possible). Prizes, donated by local businesses, can be awarded to winners and runners-up.

Moving Display

Your group can publicize its activities and neighborhood by constructing a simple display or using a large bulletin board. Photographs, posters, maps, and other materials can be attractively arranged and held in place with pushpins or Velcro. With prior permission, the display can be set up for conferences and festivals or placed in offices, or banks.

Tours For City Officials, Developers, Investors, Etc.

Briefing local officials on neighborhood issues and accomplishments is important for building rapport between City Hall and your organization. A walking, bicycle, or driving tour of one or more neighborhoods is a good way to show elected officials, City department heads, developers, investors, real estate agents, and absentee landlords what your organization has accomplished and what city actions are helping and hindering the neighborhood. Once the City and others take a more proactive approach to your organization, residents are likely to become more involved.

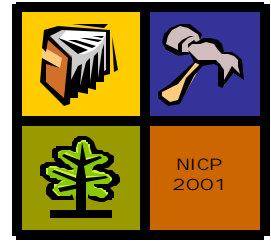
Speakers Bureau

Setting up interesting speakers to talk to your organization is a good way to publicize your neighborhood group. A lecture or a multi-media production might be an excellent way to get neighbors out to learn more about interesting topics. If speakers cannot be secured, try renting a film that identifies solutions other communities have found for problems similar to those facing your neighborhood. You might invite surrounding neighborhoods to join you hear a particularly good speaker. Promote these learning opportunities in the newspaper in order to get recognition for your neighborhood.





Notes



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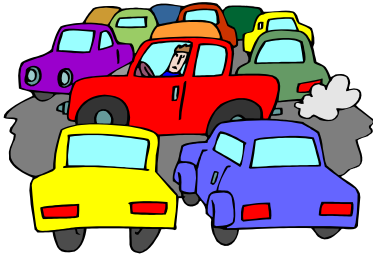


Notes



How do you...

Close a street?



Requests for temporary street closures are coordinated by the City's Public Works Department Streets and Traffic Engineering Division. This process is used to inform the Police and Fire Departments, Emergency Medical Services and VIA Metropolitan Transit. All requests for temporary street closures need to be in writing and turned into the office of the Streets and Traffic Engineering Division **at least 60 days in advance** of the closure. The Traffic Division will coordinate with other City Departments and arrange for approval of the closure at a City Council meeting. The organization must complete and submit a Street Closure Agreements form, which may be obtained from Elizabeth Vidal in the Streets and Traffic Engineering Division office (207-7720 or 207-7755). The form requires a site plan and permission from every property owner and business whose property abuts the street to be closed. The cost for temporary street closures is

How do you...

Obtain a parade permit?

Handle Traffic?

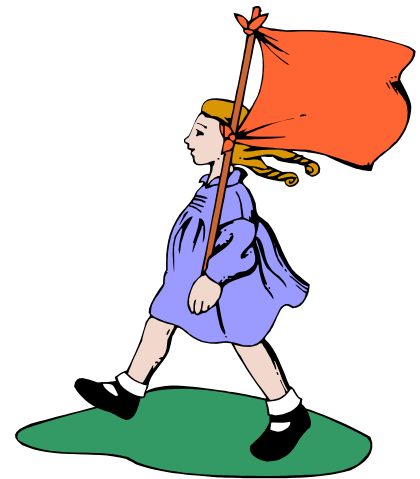
The San Antonio Police Department should be contacted if a planned event may cause traffic congestion. Contact Eric Shuey at 207-2257. This office also issues Parade Permits for events such as organized runs, walks and cycling events.

You will need to describe the date and time of the event, the approximate number of participants (cars, bikes, horses, pedestrians, etc.) as well as parade origination location, route and termination location. The Police Department will then give you a cost estimate for the number of policepersons required. If it is determined that the event requires traffic police or security officers, any Peace Officer may be eligible for hire, such as a San Antonio Police person, Bexar County Sheriff Deputy, Park Police or Constables.

You also will get a list of locations where barricades will be required. Barricades can be rented from one of three San Antonio companies, American Signal Equipment, Flasher Equipment Co., or Banner Sign and Barricade Inc. (See article on how to rent a barricade.)

A certificate of insurance, including the City of San Antonio as one of the insured, will be needed. (See article on insurance.)

City Council must approve the permit, therefore, a **30-day minimum advance notice** must be sent to the Police Department. There is a \$25 permit application fee.



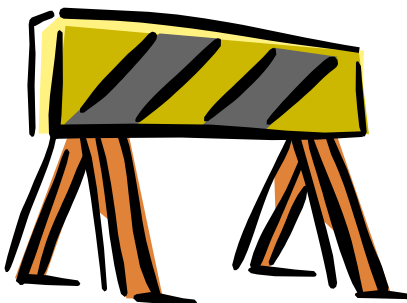
How do you...

Rent Barricades?

The neighborhood is responsible for renting barricades for an event such as a block party or parade that will impede traffic. You will even need a barricade to close off a cul-de-sac for a street party. There are three companies in San Antonio that are certified to rent barricades.

- American Signal
492-6088
- Flasher Equipment Co.
736-4251
- Banner Sign and Barricade Inc.
349-1884

These companies follow state and City regulations for street closure and will provide the barricades as well as necessary detour and warning signs. The cost to close one block with barricades at each end for a weekend will cost about \$500. If you need a sawhorse type barricade, they cost about \$10 each per day plus a handling fee and, if desired, a delivery and pick-up fee.



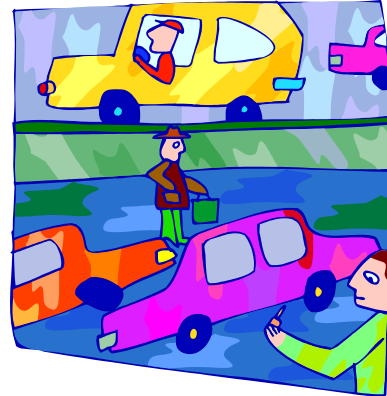
How do you...

Obtain insurance for your event?

The City of San Antonio Risk Management Division of the City Attorney's Office can help obtain the required insurance (approximately \$100 to \$700) for events held in City streets, parks, or other City property. The cost of the insurance will vary depending on the type of event and anticipated attendance. A Tenant Users Liability Insurance Plan (TULIP) policy is available that covers liability for events with expected attendance of less than 5,000 where no liquor is served. Call Lesley Smith at 207-8704 or Heidi Heridia at 207-8719 for information.

how do you...

Deal with parking?



Special events may cause parking congestion in a specific area. A few strategies for alleviating parking concerns include clearly marking available parking areas with signage, implementing a shuttle system from an off-site parking area, and providing valet parking services. Encourage neighbors to walk or bike to the event. Parking access passes may be issued to residents when streets are blocked off by barricades.

How do you...

Get permission to sell beer or wine?



A temporary "wine and beer" or "liquor" license must be obtained from the Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission's (TABC) if you want to sell alcoholic beverages at your event. Applications are available at the local TABC office. Call Doricela or Agent DeWitt at 736-4466 (M-F, 8-5) to consult about your event. To obtain a license, a non-profit organization must provide a copy of their 501(c)3 or 501(c)4 designation letter, a copy of their by-laws and their Articles of Incorporation, a list of their officers, and a lease agreement or letter from the owner of the property giving permission for alcohol to be sold or consumed on the property. The officers of the organization will be subject to the same rules and penalties for serving alcoholic beverages as a restaurant or bar. An officer of the organization must sign the application, bring a cashier's check or money order for \$70 and be interviewed by TABC.

How do you...

Arrange to sell food?

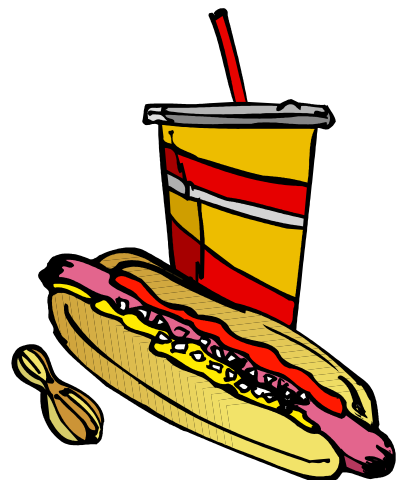
Many choices need to be made about food at your event, such as whether food and drink are part of an event fee (e.g., sit-down dinner) or if the event will offer the opportunity to sell food and beverages to participants, similar to a street festival. The group must decide whether to work with caterers, restaurants, clubs and organizations to provide food service.



Unless the food is prepared, sold and served in a licensed restaurant, a "Temporary Food Establishment" permit from the San Antonio Metro Health Department must be obtained. Contact the Food Sanitation Division at 207-8853 to discuss the rules of temporary food service with a Sanitarian and obtain a permit application. Information is also provided on their website at www.sanantonio.gov/health (see services/food sanitation).

A license fee of \$20.60 for each booth per day is required. All food must be from an approved source or licensed facility or prepared in the temporary food booth. Cakes, cookies, beans, tacos or other food preparations made at home are not permitted to be sold. Food and drink concession stands must be roofed and have an impervious floor (if the booth is not placed on concrete or asphalt). Drink stands dispensing products in sealed containers do not need roofs. There also are requirements for hand washing and trash receptacles.

All temporary food service operations must meet the requirements of the Temporary Food Establishment Code, be inspected, approved and licensed before the actual operations begin.



How do you...

Obtain tools, paint and clean-up supplies?

The City of San Antonio



Parks and Recreation Volunteer Services Division offers a tool lending service. Neighborhoods can arrange to pick up tools from the Brackenridge Park or Hemisphere site on a Friday and return them on a Tuesday or Wednesday. Many kinds of tools are available — rakes, shovels, forks, hoes, gloves, wheelbarrows, etc. — no electrical tools are available. Call 207-8452 or 207-8681 at least two to three days in advance and describe how many people you will have working and what tools you need.

Recycled paint and paint brushes also are available.

How do you...

Rent a park pavilion?

Use a park?

You can reserve a park pavilion for \$65/day by calling the Parks and Recreation Department at 207-7275. Your group may use it from 8 a.m. until 11 p.m. on the day of the reservation. Please note that pavilions do not have electricity.

If you are planning to have a "Moon Jump" in a park, there is a \$25 fee. Since electricity is not available, you will need to provide a generator.

Other than pavilion use, parks can be used free of charge for events.

How do you...

Rent a Showmobile stage?

The Parks and Recreation Department rents out a portable stage for \$550/day. The fee includes transporting the stage before and after the event, as well as set-up and tear-down. The fee also provides for a small public address system and a technician. The public address system may be used to play recorded music, but a live band will need to bring their own sound system. If the event is cancelled due to bad weather, your group will not be charged for the showmobile rental if you call to cancel before it is hooked up to be towed to the site. Call 207-3119 for more information.

You may also reference the Yellow Pages for audio, video, lighting and staging services.



How do you...

Arrange for
entertainment?



You might want to include music or cultural performances at your neighborhood event. Obviously, the more professional the talent, the higher the cost. Here are some suggestions of places to find talent:

- **Local schools.** Many middle schools and high schools have jazz bands and mariachi groups.
- **Local colleges and universities.** Call the music department to inquire about classical or jazz ensembles that may be available.
- **The Musicians Society of San Antonio** is the local musicians' union which represents professional musicians, from national stars to local groups, and can make referrals to satisfy your musical requirements. Call 227-3582 between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. (M-F). You will be asked about

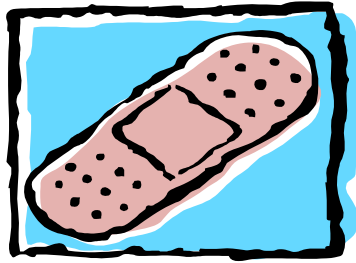
music style preference, event location, the time and length of performance, and fee scale.

- **The American Federation of Musicians (AFM) Trust Fund Program**, offered through the Musicians Society, is a national program that provides partial funding (40%) for a musical performance. The Musicians Society of San Antonio (see above bullet) will submit your application to the Federation in New York at least 45 days before the event. The performance must be free, open to the public, and have no commercial activity. The theme of the event must be cultural, social or educational (e.g., a 4th of July event honoring
- veterans). Sixty percent of the cost must be paid up front and the Federation will pay forty percent.
- The Special Programs Division of the **City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department** can help you find local talent. The City's two dance troupes, **Fandango** (Mexican Folklorico) and **Alamotion** (ballet/jazz/hip-hop) can be booked for an event. The fee is \$150 for a 45 minute performance. A list of available "Our Part of Town" amateur performers will soon be available. Organizations may obtain this list and contact the performer directly. Call Brandi Mahon at 207-3132 for information.



How do you...

Arrange for a first aid station?



You might want to consider having a First Aid Station at your event if it is large, involves physical exertion (e.g., walk-a-thon, bike-a-thon), or is in very hot weather. With at least 30 days notice, the Red Cross offers this service for a fee. To arrange for this, call 242-6569 and ask for a copy of their contract. After you return the completed contract, the Red Cross will determine the cost. Generally the cost is \$25 per hour with a four hour minimum.

Helpful Numbers

Food Permits
207-8853

Alcohol Permits
736-4466

Insurance
207-8707

Showmobile Rental
207-3119

Fire Marshall
207-8410

Musicians Society of SA
227-3582

Media Guide
250-3611

Red Cross First Aid
242-6569

*Parade Permits and
SAPD Traffic*
207-2257

Street Closure
207-7720

*Parks and Recreation
Tool Rental*
207-8452 or 207-8681

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Notes



Planning a large event

By Celine Casillas-Thomasson, Neighborhood Action Department, NCR Program

It's a simple slogan to remember; **Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance**. This slogan is the essence of developing a special event timetable. Most special events need to be planned about seven months to a year in advance. The bigger and more complex the event, the more time needed.

The first stage of planning should focus on recruiting an event committee. Conventional committee positions include an overall event chair and subcommittee chairs such as Finance, Public Relations, Logistics, Entertainment, Food and Decorations.

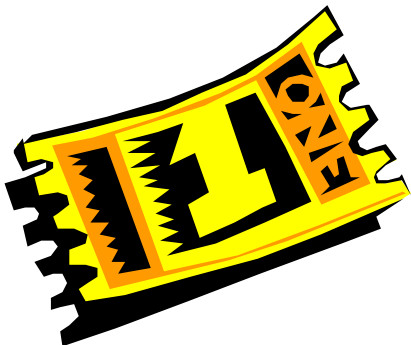
Once the event chair and committee chairs are recruited, conduct a brainstorming session to create a vision for the event. This session might take the shape of a theme, or entertainment concept, which ties event elements such as food and decorations together.

After this meeting, committee chairs should recruit and convene their committee members. At this time, planning is really essential. Committees should develop work plans with assignments, deadlines and follow-up meetings.





**Plan your work,
work your plan,
and follow-up.**



About four months prior to the event, major details about the location, food and beverage, entertainment, decorations, staging, lighting and sound should be confirmed.

Three months prior to the event, determine what promotional pieces will be needed. Examples include posters, invitations, brochures and tickets. Get these designed and printed. The Public Relations Committee should already be arranging for the media to promote and cover the event.

The two months prior to the event should be spent on details. A meeting should be held at the event site for a “walk through” of the event. This activity allows the committee chairs and event chair to see how the event will be physically laid out and provides an opportunity to spot unforeseen problems.

Intense promotion of the event should take place six weeks prior to the date. This promotion includes mailing invitations, distributing posters and delivering press releases. The time also should be spent finalizing details regarding security, parking, electrical needs, permit requirement review, clean-up, facility management and insurance.

In the final weeks and days before the event, conduct a final “walk through.” Committees should now be ready for event day.

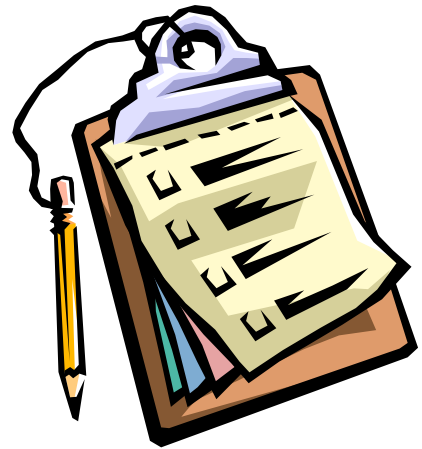
On the event day, committee members should assemble early. A designated space should be determined for volunteer check-in and a plan for contacting key team members should be shared.

The work is not complete when the event is over. The days and weeks following the event should be spent acknowledging the work of volunteers, sponsors, donors and the media. Reconcile income and expenses at this time. Share the information with volunteers and board. Schedule and conduct an event evaluation meeting. And remember that it is not too early to begin planning for the next year!

A special event check-list

By Celine Casillas-Thomasson, Neighborhood Action Department, NCR Program

Every event presents its own unique planning challenges. The following list represents broad categories of an event plan that have budget planning and recruitment implications. Review the list, identifying the resources you know you have or have access to, and then identify areas for which you will need to find outside resources.



Facility

- ☐ Food and Beverage (permits, refrigeration, storage/service areas)
- ☐ Utilities (electric & water hook-ups, extra lighting)
- ☐ Stage(s) and Sound System(s)
- ☐ Signage (directional, banners, prices, donor recognition)
- ☐ Parking and Transportation (permission/notice, shuttle system, signage)
- ☐ Waste Management (restrooms, trashcans, dumpsters)
- ☐ Event Rentals (tents, tables, chairs, skirting, podium)

People

- ☐ Committee Leadership
- ☐ Volunteers
- ☐ Legal and Insurance Advisors
- ☐ Budget and Financial Advisors
- ☐ Technical Production Advisors
- ☐ Security Advisors (parking, crowd control, ID badges)
- ☐ Medical and First Aid Assistance
- ☐ Artist/Designer (logo design, invitation, poster, letterhead)
- ☐ Set-up and Take-down Crew
- ☐ Trash and Clean-up Crew

Continued on next page

Services

- ☐ Entertainment
- ☐ Printing
- ☐ Silk Screening
- ☐ Decorations (balloons, flowers)
- ☐ Lighting and Sound Set-up and Operation
- ☐ Photography and Videography
- ☐ Communications (walkie talkies, cell phones)

Promotions

- ☐ Paid Advertising
- ☐ Public Service Announcements
- ☐ Media Sponsorships
- ☐ Web Page Design and Promotion
- ☐ Promotional Items (T-shirts, hats, buttons)
- ☐ Print Materials (invitations, flyers, posters, tickets)
- ☐ Publicity Packets
- ☐ Spokesperson Identification and Training
- ☐ Media Tour and Media Sign-in

Event Promotions

By Celine Casillas-Thomasson, Neighborhood Action Department, NCR Program

Largest, smallest, oldest, youngest, first, last. These are just a few of the “hooks” that make a story newsworthy. The first key in event promotion is to get the media interested in the event. Radio, television and print media are inundated with hundreds of people and organizations seeking attention. In order to rise to the top of the heap, there are some key rules to understand and implement.

Be sure to promote what is different about the event, and create plenty of good "photo opportunities." Identify the spokespersons for the event, and make certain they are well trained and available throughout the day.

Know the target market for the event and match it to the target market of the media. While MidTown on Blanco would certainly love all media to promote and cover their Classic Car Days event, the reality is that some media outlets reach a target market better than others. For example, one can make a good assumption that this event appeals primarily to men and to people over the age of 35. Therefore, one element of the promotion plan would be to target any radio station with an “oldies” format, and any media that appeals to a largely male audience. Media outlets provide this demographic information about their audience.

Plan to contact the media early and often. Send clippings of past events or similar events in other towns along with a business card and a note to give a “heads-up” to the editor or producer.

Answer the big 5 Ws: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How in all of your correspondence and “pitch” materials. Include a contact name and phone number. Be certain the contact is someone who can respond in a timely and prompt manner. Follow and be responsive to deadlines for information.

Do not wait to the last minute to call and check to see if the TV stations or newspaper plan to cover the event. Sometimes the media will ask for information to be faxed again. Allow time to do this.





Some San Antonio Express
News Departments:
Office of the Publisher
Community Relations
Editorial/Commentary
Business Operations
Newsroom Management
The Columnists
The News Desk
The Metro Desk
The State Desk
Sports
Business News
Features
Art
Photography
Design Desk
Neighbors Sections
Karen Davis, editor of
the Neighbor Sections
can be reached at 250-
3325 or email her at
kdavis@express-news.
net



News releases

The Express-News holds a free Media Workshop in March each year that is open to the public. They also publish a booklet titled, "Start Spreading Your News" which contains important media phone numbers and contact information. Call Lea Kochanek at 250-3611 for more information.

The following hints for writing a news release were taken from "Start Spreading the News."

- Have your news release **answer the right questions**: Who is doing what? Where? Why?
- Type **double spaced on standard-sized paper**. Postcards and small slips of paper are easily lost.
- **Avoid confusion**. Use day, date and year for clarity. March 9, 1999. Include AM or PM when giving time. Use specific street addresses for locations. Don't write "at the Majestic Theater;" write "at the Majestic Theater, 212 E. Houston."
- **Check and double-check**. Be sure all information is correct and all facts included. Be sure to give the name and daytime telephone number of someone the editor can contact if necessary.
- **Let the departments do the walking**. In many cases, more than one of the paper's departments will have an interest in your news release. However, you should send your release only to one department, as each department will share information it believes might be of interest to other departments.
- **Be an early bird**. Send in your release at least two to three weeks prior to the event.
- **Send your release to the right place**. Mail your release to the appropriate department at :
San Antonio Express News
PO Box 2171
San Antonio, TX 78297-2171

Event evaluation

An important part of future success

By Celine Casillas-Thomasson, Neighborhood Action Department, NCR Program

An often-overlooked aspect to special event planning is an event evaluation component. So much energy goes into planning and putting on a special event, the last thing anyone wants to do is think about more meetings. There are several reasons to devote attention to this process. For one thing, volunteers will want to know if they succeeded in meeting their goals. This information is best shared in a group setting. Secondly, an evaluation meeting can cement a volunteer's commitment to future events or to the organization. Volunteers go into the meeting to talk about the event and walk out with ideas about how they will do things differently next year. This commitment helps create continuity and reduces the need for extensive recruitment the next year.

Collecting on pledges or ticket money is critical if the event is going to meet its financial potential. Keep volunteers informed about the progress being made to collect these funds, as they might help with a friendly nudge, if necessary.

Don't gloss over bad news. The evaluation process is even more critical if the event failed to meet its financial or other goals. If problems such as an overspent budget or unforeseen expenses occur, you will secure a group commitment to fix the problem in the future if everyone is involved in the discussion. If sales or attendance was not as expected, then factors such as lack of promotion or competition from other events need to be evaluated. All of these issues can be better resolved with group input. Sometimes it takes volunteers to see the unrealized potential of an event to recommit themselves to success.

Even if the event was an outstanding success, it is still important to document what went right and give volunteers an opportunity to share their achievement with their peers.





Notes





Notes

